

TIME TO COLOUR UP

In the first of two articles, Anita Duke, explores the power of colour...

By Anita Duke, formatted for the IASC by Kate Cutting

Knowing your colour characteristics is a powerful confidence-building technique and one of the best beauty tools at your disposal. Not only will it help you to look healthier, younger, energised and more self-assertive, it will save incredible amounts of money by eliminating future bad shopping choices – indeed it will make shopping easier! On average, 20% of a woman's wardrobe is worn 80% of the time. A colour analysis changes this: You'll always have clothes that complement each other and you will know your best make-up colours. Gone are the days of having nothing to wear and in

comes a world of timeless, effortless style where you are free to express your personality through colour.

Imagine a world without colour: Our beautiful, world devoid of flush or tint. No lush green grass, no icy blue winter sky, no rays of golden yellow sunshine waking the resting earth in springtime, no magnificent riot of exuberant summer colours.

I write this at the end of a glorious autumn day, holidaying on the Dorset coast. Earlier I had watched the dancing, glimmering sunlight on a calm, sparkling and surprisingly clear, aqua-green sea before my eye continued on, tracing the eclectic mix of pastel-painted buildings lining the seafront, beyond which the green, gold and

coppery hues of autumn foliage could be glimpsed in the gardens above. We take for granted these colourful backdrops of our planet, but what if all colour was absent - just endless shades of grey? What a dull, depressing, horrific place it would be!

Colour and You

Personal colour analysis is the science of looking at natural eye, skin and hair colour and determining the best colours to be worn by an individual in order to harmonise with their natural colouring. Rather than being a slave to fashion, following the latest beauty trend and colours, a personal colour analysis will enable you to choose styles in a colour that suits you, enabling you to be the best you can be every day.

As a Confidence Coach and a Style Coach™ I often hear reticence to experiment with colour, but one of my favourite confidence-building techniques involves working with clients to associate feelings of confidence with colour and then “bathing” them in it.

There are those who will advocate that anyone can wear any colour. Well, yes, anyone can physically wear any colour – but whether it actually suits is another matter entirely. Are *they* wearing the colour or is it wearing *them*?

Women, in particular, often feel comfortable -“safe”- in classic black, to the extent of hiding behind it. Agreed, black has a place in everyone’s wardrobe. It’s a colour with which we associate many things - sophistication, elegance, power and mourning. However black, for many, can be overpowering. If you need to wear black, and it’s not your best colour, be aware how close to your face it is and introduce a more flattering colour in a necklace or scarf (tie for men) or in your top. Far better, wear one of your enhancing colours if circumstance allows.

Understanding Colour

So which are your best colours?

To answer that, let’s start with a brief understanding of colour. Colour has three elements:

1. **Hue (Undertone)** – determines the colour temperature an object is. Each hue will be either warm (yellow undertone) or cool (blue undertone). So a blue-red is cool but an orange-red is warm.

2. **Value (Intensity)** – determines how dark or light a colour is. Value tells us how much black or white is in the mix. So a light blue is light intensive and a dark blue is dark intensive.

3. **Chroma (Clarity)** – identifies the purity of the colour (otherwise termed clarity or saturation). Some colours have a clear chroma. They are light reflectant, bright and vibrant. Others have a soft chroma. They are muted/

greyed down and seem to absorb light. A sunny yellow is clear in clarity, whereas mustard is considered to have a muted/soft chroma.

Each one of us also exhibits these three characteristics in differing levels of dominance. So by wearing clothing with the corresponding colour characteristics, and appropriate levels of contrast, harmony will be created. Understanding this tonal balance is what enables a Style Coach™ to determine a client’s colour characteristics and advise the best colours to wear. The resulting tonal twelve-seasonal approach is more advanced and accurate than the traditional four-season colour analysis technique, particularly for people who, like me, are ‘between’ seasons.

The Quick Fix

Sounding complicated?

Well, there’s a much easier do-it-yourself way to use with every item in your wardrobe. Simply hold the item to your face in front of a mirror in broad daylight. Pay careful attention to your eyes, skin and hair and notice what you see in the mirror.

The right colour will:

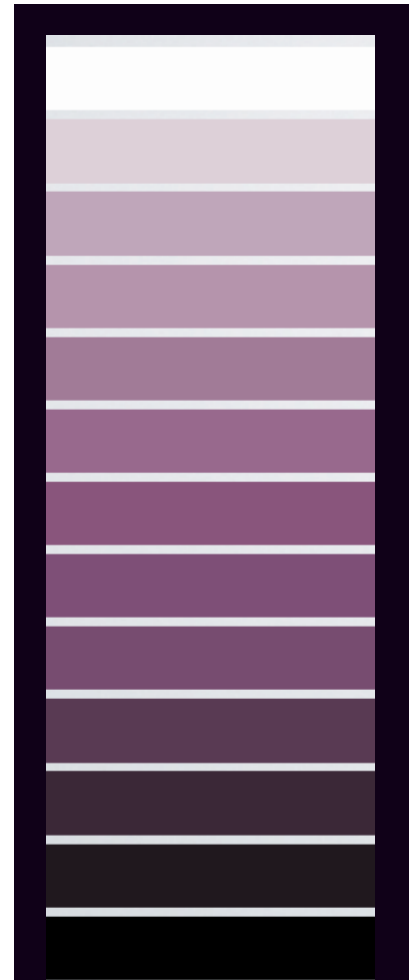
- Give the illusion of lighting your face from underneath.
- Add radiance to your face.
- Give your skin a fresher and younger appearance, helping to camouflage fine lines, dark circles & blemishes.
- Enhance your eye colour and soften your facial features.
- Enable people to notice you, not the colour you are wearing. You will appear more confident and alert.

The wrong colours will:

- Throw dark/coloured shadows on your neck & chin.
- Give you an uneven looking complexion colour.
- Distract from your natural features - the colour stands out more than you.
- Drain you, add dark shadows/ greyness to your skin making you look tired, even sick.
- Accentuate fine lines, blemishes and double chins.

Have a look in your wardrobe. You’ll be amazed at the power of colour. You’ll know if you’ve got it right – you’ll receive comments about how well you look and, of course, if you want to experiment further ask your Style Coach™ for advice.

Are up you ready to colour up? Go on, dare to be different. Dare to be YOU!



Anita Duke is a Certified Style Coach™ & Licensed NLP Practitioner.

For more information visit www.confidencewithstyle.co.uk